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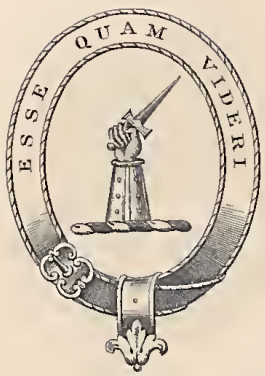

Robert Washington Oates

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VERBATIM REPRINT OF A PAMPHLET,

Published by Messrs. Hatchard and Son,

ENTITLED

THREE MONTHS IN JAMAICA,

IN 1832:

COMPRISING

A RESIDENCE OF SEVEN WEEKS ON A SUGAR PLANTATION.

BY HENRY WHITELEY.

London: Printed for the Anti-Slavery Society, and sold at their Office, No. 18, Aldermanbury, and by B. Bagster, at the Depôt of Anti-Slavery Publications, No. 15, Paternoster Row. Price 1*d.* each; or 6*s.* per 100; or £2. 10*s.* per 1000.

The reasons that have induced me, after mature reflection, to lay before the public the following account of what I witnessed in Jamaica, during my late visit, are briefly these.

1st. I feel it due to my own character, unimportant as is my station in society, to detail, for the information of many friends who have kindly interested themselves in my welfare, the circumstances that led to my return home so unexpectedly, and after so short a residence. 2ndly. I feel it due to my fellow-men—to my countrymen in England, and to their fellow-subjects in Jamaica—to state, without reserve and without exaggeration, the facts which there fell under my observation. Lastly, I feel it to be a religious duty—a duty to God as well as to man (since Providence, by means so unforeseen, and at so eventful a juncture, has placed me in circumstances that render my humble testimony of some immediate value), to give my plain and deliberate testimony respecting the character of the system which I found in operation in that colony. In performing this task, I am aware that I shall inevitably give some offence, and awaken some hostility; but, constrained as I am by considerations

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which I DARE not disregard, and avoiding, as I shall carefully do, all disclosures but such as are requisite to authenticate the facts and develope the system, I will not flinch from whatever responsibility the performance of my duty involves, however painful in some instances it may be to others as well as to myself.

I arrived in Jamaica on the 3rd of September, 1832. I was sent out by a respectable West India house in London, under the patronage of a relative of mine, who is a partner in that house; being furnished with a recommendation to their acting attorney in the island, with a view to be employed either in a store, or as a book-keeper upon a plantation.

Previously to my arrival in Jamaica, I had no clear conception of the nature of Colonial Slavery; and my anticipations in regard to the treatment and condition of the slaves were favourable rather than otherwise. It so happened, that, excepting what I had seen in newspapers, I had never read a single publication against Colonial Slavery, and had never either attended a public meeting, or heard a lecture delivered on the subject. I was, in fact, one of those indivividuals who believe that there is more *real* slavery in England than in any of her colonies. Many a time I had blamed such gentlemen as Mr. Buxton, Dr. Lushington, and others, for making so much ado in Parliament about Colonial Slavery, and neglecting (as I conceived) the slavery of the poor factory children at home, with whose condition I was well acquainted, having been all my life resident in a manufacturing district, and concerned, with some of my relatives, in the blanket business, at Heckmondwike, near Leeds. What tended to confirm me much in these views was the perusal of the last Order in Council for the Amelioration of Slavery, which I understood to have been sent out for adoption in all our slave colonies. A copy of this document had been sent by a member of parliament to the Central Committee at Leeds on the Factory System, of which I was a member, in order to enable us to judge whether the condition of the West India slaves or that of the factory children was preferable; and the conclusion which I came to upon its perusal, and under the persuasion that it had been generally adopted, was this—that, all things considered, the condition of the negro slave was much preferable to that of the factory child. And with these impressions I landed at St. Ann's Bay, in Jamaica.

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The day that I landed I was informed, by a clerk of the manager's, that a horse would be sent down from New Ground estate for me next morning; and that I would have to remain on that estate till I heard from the manager, or attorney of the proprietors, who was then at his own property, about sixteen miles from the Bay.

The same day I dined at St. Ann's Bay, on board the vessel I arrived in, in company with several colonists, among whom was Mr. Hamilton Brown, representative for the parish of St. Ann, in the Colonial Assembly. Some reference having been made to the new Order in Council, I was rather startled to hear that gentleman swear by his Maker that that Order should never be adopted in Jamaica; nor would the planters of Jamaica, he said, permit the interference of the Home Government with their slaves in any shape. A great deal was said by him and others present about the happiness and comfort enjoyed by the slaves, and of the many advantages possessed by them of which the poor in England were destitute. Among other circumstances mentioned in proof of this, Mr. Robinson, a wharfinger, stated that a slave in that town had sent out printed cards to invite a party of his negro acquaintance to a supper party. One of these cards was handed to Mr. Hamilton Brown, who said he would present it to the Governor, as a proof of the comfortable condition of the slave population. This, and other circumstances then mentioned, tended to confirm the notions I had brought from England respecting slavery in Jamaica; and, although I was somewhat shocked and staggered by seeing the same day the Methodist chapel at St. Ann's Bay lying in ruins, as it had been destroyed by the whites six months before, and by learning that the Missionaries were no longer permitted to preach in that parish, I nevertheless left the place next morning with my favourable impressions respecting the condition of the slaves not materially abated. These impressions, however, I was not permitted long to indulge.

I proceeded on horseback to New Ground estate the next day. On my way thither I saw much majestic and beautiful scenery, and enjoyed the prospect exceedingly, until I came in sight of a gang of negroes at work. Most of them were females; and they were superintended by a driver, with the cart-whip in his hand. Just as I rode past, the driver cracked his whip and cried out, "Work! work!" They were manuring the canes, and carrying the manure in baskets on their heads. It appeared to me disgustingly dirty work;

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for the moisture from the manure was dripping through the baskets, and running down the bodies of the negroes. This sight annoyed me considerably, and raised some doubts as to the preferable condition of West India slaves to factory children. The enchanting scenery and beautiful humming birds no longer amused me; and the thundering crack of the cart-whip, sounding in my ears as I rode along, excited feelings of a very unpleasing description.

On reaching the estate I was received in the most friendly manner by the overseer, and entertained with West Indian hospitality. This gentleman, after some enquiries as to the state of things in England, began to enlarge on the comfortable condition of the slaves; and, pointing to some negro coopers who were working in the yard, asked if I could perceive any difference between the condition of these slaves and that of English labourers. I owned I could not: they seemed to work with great regularity and apparent good humour.

Immediately afterwards the overseer called out, in a very authoritative tone, "Blow shell." A large conch shell was then blown by one of the domestic slaves, and in a few minutes four negro drivers made their appearance in front of the house, accompanied by six common negroes. The drivers had each a long staff in his hand, and a large cart-whip coiled round his shoulders. They appeared to be very stout athletic men. They stood before the hall door, and the overseer put on his hat and went out to them, while I sat at the open window and observed the scene which followed,—having been informed that the other six negroes were to be punished.

When the overseer went out, the four drivers gave him an account, on notched tallies, of their half day's work, and received fresh orders. The overseer then asked a few questions of the drivers respecting the offences of the six slaves brought up for punishment. No question was asked of the culprits themselves, nor was any explanation waited for. Sentence was instantly pronounced, and instantly carried into execution.

The first was a man of about thirty-five years of age. He was what is called a pen-keeper, or cattle herd; and his offence was having suffered a mule to go astray. At the command of the overseer he proceeded to strip off part of his clothes, and laid himself flat on his belly, his back and buttocks being uncovered. One of the drivers then commenced flogging him with the cart-whip. This whip is about ten feet long, with a short stout handle, and is an instrument of terrible power. It is whirled by the operator round his

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head, and then brought down with a rapid motion of the arm upon the recumbent victim, causing the blood to spring at every stroke. When I saw this spectacle, now for the first time exhibited before my eyes, with all its revolting accompaniments, and saw the degraded and mangled victim writhing and groaning under the infliction, I felt horror-struck. I trembled, and turned sick: but being determined to see the whole to an end, I kept my station at the window. The sufferer, writhing like a wounded worm, every time the lash cut across his body, cried out, "Lord! Lord! Lord!" When he had received about twenty lashes, the driver stopped to pull up the poor man's shirt (or rather smock frock), which had worked down upon his galled posteriors. The sufferer then cried, "Think me no man? think me no man?" By that exclamation I understood him to say "Think you I have not the feelings of a man?" The flogging was instantly recommenced and continued; the negro continuing to cry "Lord! Lord! Lord!" till thirty-nine lashes had been inflicted. When the man rose up from the ground, I perceived the blood oozing out from the lacerated and tumefied parts where he had been flogged; and he appeared greatly exhausted. But he was instantly ordered off to his usual occupation.

The next was a young man apparently about eighteen or nineteen years of age. He was forced to uncover himself and lie down in the same mode as the former, and was held down by the hands and feet by four slaves, one of whom was a young man who was himself to be flogged next. This latter was a mulatto—the offspring, as I understood, of some European formerly on the estate by a negro woman, and consequently born to slavery. These two youths were flogged exactly in the mode already described, and writhed and groaned under the lash, as if enduring great agony. The mulatto bled most, and appeared to suffer most acutely. They received each thirty-nine lashes. Their offence was some deficiency in the performance of the task prescribed to them. They were both ordered to join their gang as usual in the afternoon at cane-cutting.

Two young women of about the same age were, one after the other, then laid down and held by four men, their back parts most indecently uncovered, and thirty-nine lashes of the blood-stained whip inflicted upon each poor creature's posteriors. Their exclamation likewise was "Lord! Lord!

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Lord!" They seemed also to suffer acutely, and were apparently a good deal lacerated. Another woman (the sixth offender) was also laid down and uncovered for the lash; but at the intercession of one of the drivers she was reprieved. The offence of these three women was similar to that of the two young men—some defalcation in the amount of labour.

The overseer stood by and witnessed the whole of this cruel operation, with as much seeming indifference as if he had been paying them their wages. I was meanwhile perfectly unmanned by mingled horror and pity. Yet I have no reason to believe that the *natural* feelings of this young man (whose age did not exceed twenty-four years) were less humane or sensitive than my own. But such is the callousness which constant familiarity with scenes of cruelty engenders. He had been a book-keeper, for four years previously, on another estate belonging to the same proprietors, and had been appointed overseer on this estate only a few months before. His reception of me when I arrived was so kind, frank, and cordial, that I could not have believed him, had I not seen it with my own eyes, to be *capable* of inflicting such cruelty on a fellow-creature.

As soon as this scene was over, the overseer came into the hall, and asked me to drink some rum and water with him. I told him I was sick, and could taste nothing: that I was in fact overwhelmed with horror at the scene I had just witnessed. He said it was not a pleasant duty certainly, but it was an indispensable one; and that I would soon get used, as others did, to such spectacles. I asked if he found it necessary to inflict such punishments frequently. He replied it was uncertain; "I may not," he said, "have to do it again this month, or I may have to do it to-morrow."

This, my first full view of West India Slavery, occurred on the 4th of September, 1832, between twelve and two o'clock, being the day after my landing in the island, and within an hour after my arrival on the plantation.

I resided on New Ground estate, from the time of my arrival in the beginning of September, and exclusive of some occasional absences, altogether fully seven weeks; and, during that period, I witnessed with my own eyes the *regular* flogging of upwards of twenty negroes. I heard also of many other negroes being flogged by order of the overseer and book-keepers, in the field, while I resided on the plantation, besides the cases which came under my own personal

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observation. Neither do I include in this account the slighter floggings inflicted by the drivers in superintending the working gangs,—which I shall notice afterwards.

The following are additional cases of which I have a distinct recollection. But I have retained the precise date of only one of these cases (the 12th) from having found it necessary to destroy almost all my papers, in consequence of the threats of the Colonial Unionists.

1st. A slave employed in the boiling-house. He was a very stout negro, and uncommonly well dressed for a slave. He was laid down on the ground, held by two men, and flogged on the naked breech in the mode I have described, receiving 39 lashes. I was afterwards assured by one of the book-keepers that this negro had really committed no offence, but that the overseer had him punished to *spite* a book-keeper under whose charge this slave was at the time, and with whom he had a difference; and, as he could not flog the book-keeper, he flogged the slave. Such at least was the account I received from a third party, another book-keeper. I could scarcely have given credit to such an allegation, had I not heard of similar cases on other plantations, on authority I had no cause to doubt.

2nd & 3rd. Two young women. This punishment took place one evening on the barbecue, where pimento is dried. Mr. M'Lean, the overseer, and I, were sitting in the window seat of his hall; and I was just remarking to him that I observed the drivers took great pride in being able to crack their whips loud and well. While we were thus conversing, the gang of young slaves, employed in plucking pimento, came in with their basket-loads. The head book-keeper as usual proceeded to examine the baskets, to ascertain that each slave had duly performed the task allotted. The baskets of two poor girls were pronounced deficient; and the book-keeper immediately ordered them to be flogged. The overseer did not interfere, nor ask a single question, the matter not being deemed of sufficient importance to require his interference, though this took place within a few yards of the open window where we were sitting. One of the girls was instantly laid down, her back parts uncovered in the usual brutal and indecent manner, and the driver commenced flogging—every stroke upon her flesh giving a loud crack, and the wretched creature at the same time calling out in agony, "Lord! Lord! Lord!" "That," said the overseer, turning to me, with a chuckling laugh, "that is

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the best cracking, by G—d!"* The other female was then flogged also on the bare posteriors, but not quite so severely. They received, as usual, each 39 lashes.

4th & 5th. On another occasion I saw two girls from 10 to 13 years of age, flogged by order of the overseer. They belonged to the second gang, employed in cane-weeding, and were accused of having been idle that morning. Two other girls of the same age were brought up to hold them down. They got each 39.

6th & 7th. After this I saw two young men flogged (very severely) in the cooper's yard. I did not learn their offence.

8th. On another occasion, a man in the road leading from New Ground to Golden Spring. We met this man while riding out, and for some offence which I did not learn (for by that time I had found my enquiries on such points had become offensive), the overseer called a driver from the field and ordered him 39 on the spot.

9th & 10th. Two young men before breakfast, for having slept too long. They were mule-drivers, and it being then crop time, they had been two days and a night previously at work without sleep. As the overseer and I were going out at day-break (the sun was not yet up), we found them only putting the harness on their mules. They ought, according to the regulations then prescribed on the plantation, to have been out half an hour sooner; and for this offence they received a very severe flogging.

11th. A girl who had been missing for some days, having absconded from the plantation for fear of punishment.

I shall mention only other two cases which particularly excited my sympathy; for, after a few weeks, although my moral abhorrence of slavery continued to increase, my sensibility to the sight of physical suffering was so greatly abated, that a common flogging no longer affected me to the very painful degree that I at first experienced.

12th. The first of these two cases was that of a married woman, the mother of several children. She was brought up to the overseer's door one morning; and one of the drivers who came with her accused her of having stolen a fowl. Some feathers, said to have been found in her hut, were exhibited

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* The cart-whip, when wielded by a vigorous arm, gives forth a loud report, which, without any exaggeration, may be likened to the report of a small pistol. I have often heard it distinctly at two miles' distance in the open air.

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as evidence of her guilt. The overseer asked her if she would pay for the fowl. She said something in reply which I did not clearly understand. The question was repeated, and a similar reply again given. The overseer then said, "Put her down." On this the woman set up a shriek, and rent the air with her cries of terror. Her countenance grew quite ghastly, and her lips became pale and livid. I was close to her and particularly noticed her remarkable aspect and expression of countenance. The overseer swore fearfully, and repeated his order—"Put her down!" The woman then craved permission to tie some covering round her nakedness, which she was allowed to do. She was then extended on the ground, and held down by two negroes. Her gown and shift were literally torn from her back, and, thus brutally exposed, she was subjected to the cart-whip. The punishment inflicted on this poor creature was inhumanly severe. She was a woman somewhat plump in her person, and the whip being wielded with great vigour, every stroke cut deep into the flesh. She writhed and twisted her body violently under the infliction—moaning loudly, but uttering no exclamation in words, except once when she cried out, entreating that her nakedness might not be indecently exposed,—appearing to suffer, from matronly modesty, even more acutely on account of her indecent exposure than the cruel laceration of her body. But the overseer only noticed her appeal by a brutal reply (too gross to be repeated), and the flogging continued. Disgusted as I was, I witnessed the whole to a close. I numbered the lashes, stroke by stroke, and counted *fifty*,—thus exceeding by eleven the number allowed by the Colonial law to be inflicted at the arbitrary will of the master or manager. This was the only occasion on which I saw the legal number of 39 lashes exceeded, but I never knew the overseer or head book-keeper give less than 39. This poor victim was shockingly lacerated. When permitted to rise, she again shrieked violently. The overseer swore roughly, and threatened, if she was not quiet, to put her down again. He then ordered her to be taken to the hot-house or hospital, and put in the stocks. She was to be confined in the stocks for several nights, while she worked in the yard during the day at light work. She was too severely mangled to be able to go to the field for some days. This flogging took place on the 27th of September.

13th. The flogging of an old man, about 60 years of age, is the last case I shall mention. He was the third driver upon

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the estate,—there being five altogether, whose sole employment was literally *driving*, or coercing by the whip, the negro population to labour. With this old man I had had some conversation, and felt particularly interested in him, for his silvery locks and something in his aspect reminded me powerfully of my aged father, whom I had left in England. He had been upon the estate a great number of years. He told me that not one of the negroes belonging to the gang he wrought in when he first came to New Ground was now alive. He came up to the overseer's door at shell-blow one day, and gave in, as is the practice, on a tally or bit of notched stick, his account of the half day's work of the gang he superintended. The overseer was dissatisfied—said it was insufficient—and ordered him to get a flogging. The old man said, "Well, Busha, me could have done no better, had you been standing by." Then, groaning deeply, he laid down his staff and whip, unloosed his clothes, and lay quietly down to be flogged without being held. One of the other drivers, who had been called forward, appeared very reluctant to perform the office; but, on the overseer swearing a rough oath or two, he proceeded to inflict the usual punishment of 39 lashes. The old man, looking up in the overseer's face imploringly, cried out after every stroke for several minutes, "Busha! Busha! Busha!" but seeing no signs of relenting, he ceased to call on him, expressing his feelings only by groans. I was deeply affected by the sight, and felt at the moment that these groans were an awful appeal to the judgment seat of Him who heareth the cry of the oppressed. When the punishment was over, and the poor man arose, the other drivers looked at each other and shook their heads, but uttered not a word. They dared not.

In conversing with the overseer about these floggings, I had more than once expressed the pain and horror I felt at seeing that negro slavery was accompanied by so much suffering. The overseer endeavoured to persuade me, contrary to the evidence of my own senses, that the punishments were not severe, and assured me that there were, moreover, negroes who had never been flogged in their lives. I afterwards questioned the head book-keeper, Mr. Burrows, on this point and asked him if he could point out a single working negro on the estate, male or female, single or married, who had not been flogged? After some reflection he replied, that he could not specify a single one who had not been punished with the cart-whip. Now there were 277

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slaves on that estate, of whom a very small proportion were children and yet a man who had been among them for only two years did not, know of one (with the exception of mere children) who had not been once or oftener subjected to this cruel, degrading, and revolting punishment.

After these conversations I made every exertion to ascertain this fact, by making enquiries among the slaves themselves, as opportunities occurred. The general reply to such interrogations was—"Ah! Massa, me been flog many a time by Busha." On putting the question to an aged negro who had formerly been employed to take care of the sheep, but was now in the stable, he said he had been flogged many a time. "And what were you flogged for?" I enquired. "When sheep go stray—when sheep sick—when sheep die—then," said he, "Busha put me down and flog me till me bleed." "And how many lashes," I asked, "did Busha ever give you?" "Ah! Massa," said the poor old man, "when me down na ground, and dey flog me till me bleed, me someting else to do den for count de lashes." This same man, as he was saddling my horse on the day I finally left the estate, made a remark that struck me. "Now, Massa," said he, "you see how poor negro be 'pressed (oppressed). We no mind de work—but dey 'press us too too bad."

I asked another negro, a married man and the father of a family, if either he or his wife had ever been flogged. He replied, that both he and his wife had been flogged frequently: and further remarked, that it was very disheartening that after trying "to be good negro," they could not escape the lash any more than the worst slaves on the estate. This man was a Baptist—a very religious and exemplary man. He had been a member of the Baptist chapel at St. Ann's Bay, which I saw lying in ruins. He could read a little, and I gave him a hymn book.

This last mentioned slave was a carpenter. I therefore asked the head carpenter (a Scotchman, named Walden), if he had ever flogged this man. He replied that he had, and added, that he was obliged to flog all the slaves under his charge. He never took them out with him into the wood, he said, without the cart-whip, so that if any of them did not please him he might put him down and give him a flogging.

I asked others similar questions, and received, in every instance, answers to the same effect—all proving the truth of the head book-keeper's statement that he knew not a single working slave on the estate who had not been flogged,

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I may here mention that on meeting with a slave of the name of Johnstone, belonging to the neighbouring estate of Green Park, I asked him if he had ever been flogged. He replied—"Yes, Massa, me been flog, and been work in chains three months and three days." On enquiring further, I found this man's offence was going to the Methodist chapel (Mr. Whitehouse's); and that for this offence he had been cruelly flogged by order of his owner, Mr. Hurlock (not by the overseer), and worked in chains for three months.

During my residence at New Ground, the St. Ann's workhouse gang (of convict slaves) was employed in digging canes-holes on the plantation. I had thus frequent opportunities of seeing and conversing with them. I shall never forget the impression I received from the first near view of these wretched people. The son of the captain, or superintendent of the workhouse (a person named Drake), accompanied me to the field the first day I went out to see this gang; and, as we went along, he remarked that I should probably be somewhat shocked by their appearance, but ought to bear in mind that these negroes were convicted malefactors—rebels, thieves, and felons. On approaching the spot I witnessed indeed a most affecting and appalling spectacle. The gang, consisting of forty-five negroes, male and female, were all chained by the necks in couples; and in one instance I observed a man and a woman chained together. Two stout drivers were standing over them, each armed both with a cart-whip and a cat-o'-nine tails. Nearly the whole gang were working without any covering on the upper part of their bodies; and on going up to them, with a view to closer inspection, I found that their backs, from the shoulders to the buttocks, were scarred and lacerated in all directions, by the frequent application of the cat and the cart-whip, which the drivers used at discretion, independently of severer floggings by order of the superintendent. I could not find a single one who did not bear on his body evident marks of this savage discipline. Some were marked with large weals, and with what in Yorkshire we should call *wrethes*, or ridges of flesh healed over. Others were crossed with long scabbed scars across the buttocks; on others, again, the gashes were raw and recent. Altogether it was the most horrid sight that ever my eyes beheld. One of them had on a coarse shirt or smock frock, which was actually dyed red with his blood. The drivers struck some of them severely, while I was present, for falling behind the rank in their work.

I asked one of the drivers what were the offences for

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which these people had been condemned. He replied that some of them were convicts from Trelawney parish, who had been concerned in the late rebellion; others were thieves and runaways; and, pointing out three individuals (two men and a woman), he added that these had been taken up while martial law was in force—*for praying*. I asked if I might be permitted to speak to these three persons; and, meeting with no objection, I went forward and conversed with them. One of them, whose name was Rogers, in reply to my enquiries, informed me that he had been condemned to the workhouse gang for meeting with other negroes for prayer. The other man, whose name I have forgot, told me that this was the second time that he had been sent to work in chains solely for this offence—namely, joining with some of his friends and relatives in social prayer to his Maker and Redeemer! In order to assure myself further of the truth of this extraordinary fact, I made enquiry respecting it of some of the most intelligent negroes on New Ground estate, to whom the particulars connected with these people's condemnation were known, and received such full corroboration of their statement as left me no doubt whatever of its truth. Indeed I soon found good reason to believe that on many estates there are few offences for which the unhappy slaves are punished with more certainty or severity than *praying*.

Drake, the superintendent of this workhouse gang, came frequently to New Ground, while they were employed there, to see that they did sufficient work (for it was paid for by the piece); and one day he was invited by the overseer to dine with us. After dinner, while he and I were standing at the door, he proceeded to abuse the friends of negro emancipation in England in very violent terms, and added, that if ever I uttered a word unfriendly to them (the slave holders), he would have great pleasure in cutting my head off. Then, extending his arm, and pointing to his miserable gang, who were at work, full in view, at no great distance, he uttered a tremendous oath, and said—"Oh! if I had but Buxton and Lushington chained by the necks in yonder gang, I would *cure* them—that would I, by G—! We would be all right," he added, "if these devils would but let us alone."—This man, Drake, as I was told by the overseer, has a salary of £500 currency.

I may here notice a few other particulars illustrative of the Jamaica plantation system, which fell under my observation.

On New Ground estate there were about fifteen or sixteen

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religious negroes who became personally known to me, and I heard that there were others. Those that I knew were Baptists and Wesleyans. After they found they might have confidence in me, they often expressed their deep regret for the banishment of the missionaries. While I was there they durst not be found praying together. If they had, they would have been sure of a flogging. One of the proprietors in England (my relative) had told me that I might preach to the slaves on the estate, and attend to their religious instruction; but I soon found that this would not be permitted by their own Colonial agents. Indeed the attorney, at our very first interview, expressly prohibited me so much as to mention religion to the negroes.

On Sunday there was no religious observance whatever on the estate, nor did I see or hear of any religious observance on any estate in that parish. The whites usually occupy Sunday in visits to their brother overseers and bookkeepers on other estates; or if at home, in playing at draughts and quoits. The negroes were all at work on their provision grounds, or in carrying their provisions to market, except the cooper's gang, who were at work for the estate, but for wages on that day, as the overseer assured me. The negroes receive only a few salt herrings from the estate, and must necessarily employ the Sundays in cultivating their provision grounds. The law allows them only twenty-six week-days in the year for this necessary work.

In week-days the negroes always went to their work before daylight in the morning; on an average about five o'clock or a quarter past five. They left off after dusk, or from a quarter to half-past six in the evening. They had half an hour for breakfast, and sometimes an hour for dinner, but generally not a full hour. During crop, which was proceeding while I was there, they worked in spells the whole of every alternate night; that is to say, the spell that commenced on Monday morning got no sleep till Tuesday night, working all day in the field and all night in the boiling-house.

The sufferings of the slaves from this hard and continuous labour, and from the continual floggings of the drivers to exact it, are severe beyond description. When they are digging cane holes, they generally work all in a row; and it frequently happens that the strong negroes outstrip the weaker ones. Then it is that the drivers (who stand *in front* of the gang in holeing, but *behind* in cane-cutting,) march up to those who have fallen back in their work, and flog them

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on to further exertion; the drivers being themselves liable to be flogged, if the prescribed work is not duly executed by their gang. I have seen the drivers put down slaves in the field, and inflict at their own discretion, from six to twelve lashes with the cart-whip. I have seen them order females to stand at a convenient distance, and flog them as long as they saw fit. I have frequently seen the boatswain (as the driver at the boiling-house is called) flog old and young, male and female, in this manner. One night I saw this driver flog a female slave very severely, and one blow which struck her in the face caused her to scream out violently. Upon enquiry I found that this woman had a child in the hot-house (or hospital), and she had ventured to leave her work a little earlier than usual to see her sick child. For this she received the punishment. On another occasion, I saw this same boatswain put down a very handsome brown girl, and give her ten lashes. The overseer was with me at the time, and looked on, without making any remark. Another time I saw the head driver, a very powerful man, give a tremendous cut with the cart-whip to a female about fifty years of age, who was cutting canes with the great gang. The overseer and one of the book-keepers were standing by with me, but neither took the least notice. In fact, these floggings were taking place incessantly upon the working negroes; insomuch that I came to this conclusion, after some observation, —that the slaves suffered more in the aggregate from the *driving* in the field than from the severer regular punishments inflicted by order of the overseer and book-keepers. The drivers invariably flog negroes severely who happen to be too late in coming out in the morning; and it frequently happens, that when they oversleep their time, the negroes, for fear of punishment, run away for days or weeks from the estate. When they do return, as they generally do after a short space, it is with the certainty of encountering a tremendous flogging from the overseer, and being condemned to sleep every night in the stocks for weeks running. I have frequently seen six or seven of these runaways turned out of the stocks in a morning, taken to the field to cut canes, and then brought back at night to be again locked into the stocks. The fear of punishment, I was told, was the ordinary cause of their becoming runaways.

The tyrannical severity of the system may be aptly illustrated by another little incident which I shall here mention. One Sunday afternoon, while I was sitting, as usual, with

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the overseer at the open window of the hall, an old negro woman, apparently upwards of sixty years of age, came forward, and begged leave to tell her story to "Busha." She proceeded to state that she was now old and stiff; that she had some infirmity in her knees, which she bared to exhibit to him; that she was no longer able to stand the field labour; and under these circumstances she pleaded to be allowed to "sit down"—that is, to be released from the regular labour of the estate. The overseer refused her suit, ordered her two or three times to be gone, and said "she talked English too well." At length, on the old woman still continuing her importunity, he lost patience, called one of the domestic slaves, and ordered him to put the supplicant in the stocks. To the stocks accordingly she was instantly taken, and confined in them every night for a week; continuing to work as usual in the field by day. At length on the following Sunday, she was begged off by the head driver, and came to return thanks, in my presence, to the overseer for her release. And thus was quashed her supplication for mitigation of hard labour, and other supplicants intimidated from appearing.

On conversing with Mr. M'Lean, (as I frequently did when I first went to New Ground) respecting the extreme severity of the system pursued on that estate, he assured me that he was far from being a harder task-master than other overseers on sugar plantations; and to convince me of this he told me of "severities" (or rather atrocities) exercised on other estates in the same parish, far beyond any which I witnessed on New Ground. I also heard of extraordinary instances of cruelty from others; and I was told, by a resident in St. Andrew's parish, that the floggings there were more severe than in St. Ann's; switches of the prickly ebony being frequently used after the cart-whip. But I shall not attempt to detail what I learned only by hearsay, although on the evidence of persons implicated in supporting the system. I can only vouch, of course, for what I myself witnessed; and that most assuredly I have rather softened than exaggerated.

The open and avowed licentiousness of the plantation whites disgusted me almost as much as the cruelty of the system. At New Ground, the overseer, book-keepers, and head carpenter, all lived in the habitual practice of gross and unblushing profligacy. The tremendous *moral* tyranny

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that may be, and unquestionably often is, exercised in the uncontrolled indulgence of this brutalizing vice, is as obvious as it is appalling. One of the book-keepers voluntarily mentioned to me, that he had had twelve "negro wives" within six months. I saw another of the whites on this estate give his "housekeeper" (concubine), a cruel beating with a supplejack while she was in a state of pregnancy, and for a very trifling fault. For refusing to degrade myself by complying with "the custom of the country," as it was lightly termed, in this point, I was looked upon, as I soon perceived, with mingled contempt and suspicion by the plantation whites generally.

I shall now mention the circumstances which led to my abandonment of the views I had in going out to Jamaica, and obliged me to return to England, after so short a residence.

After I had been about a week on New Ground estate, I had an interview at St Ann's Bay with the attorney or agent of the proprietors, to whose patronage I had been recommended by my relative in England. I told him that from what I had seen of a planter's life I felt myself to be but ill adapted for that profession, and that I had resolved to abandon all thoughts of it; but, as I had neither friend nor acquaintance save himself in that part of the island, I should feel much indebted to him if he would allow me to remain, as a resident merely, on the estate until I could hear from a correspondent in Kingston, to whom I had written, requesting him to make every possible exertion to procure me employment in a store, or any other creditable occupation, by which I might earn a livelihood unconnected with the plantation system. The attorney asked the name of the gentleman to whom I had written. I told him it was Mr. Pennock, the Wesleyan missionary; and informed him that I was a member of that Society myself, and had occasionally officiated as a local preacher before I left England. The attorney seemed a good deal disconcerted by this information. He assured me that Mr. Pennock could do nothing to assist me; and added, that such was the feeling of the inhabitants of Jamaica against the sectarians, that he himself, though he was the man of the greatest influence in that parish, would be exposed to great odium—perhaps peril—if the planters knew that he was patronizing a person of my character. "They would think nothing," he said, pointing to the sea, "of throwing me in *there* for that, and for no other offence." As, however, I had been sent out to him by the proprietors, he

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added, that he would do the best he could to promote my interests. Meanwhile he advised me to remain on the estate, where, he said, as I disliked the system, I should have nothing to do with it; but charged me to let no person know that I was a Methodist; and, (as I have already mentioned) he strictly prohibited me from attempting to instruct the negroes, or to say a single word to them about religion. In other respects he appeared friendly, and promised to give me a letter to Mr. Whitehorn, an attorney at Kingston, a relative of his, with a view to find me some other occupation.

About a week after this, I was informed by a neighbouring book-keeper that it had been discovered by the address of my letter to Mr. Pennock, that I was in correspondence with the sectarians; and that some gentlemen at St. Ann's Bay had formed a plan to tar and feather me, if they could find a convenient opportunity. This information I communicated by letter to the attorney, who resided on a property of his own, about twenty miles distant from New Ground. He immediately sent for me to come to him, warning me not to travel by the bay, for fear of the Colonial Unionists, but to come round by the mountain road. I went accordingly, and remained a night with him. I then proceeded to Kingston in search of employment, and saw Mr. Pennock, and other persons who were very desirous to promote my views; but meeting with no success, I was obliged to return to New Ground. I subsequently made another journey to Kingston, but with no better result.

At another interview which I soon afterwards had with th attorney, I told him I thought it very hard, that after having been at so much expense in coming out to Jamaica, I could obtain no situation in the Island merely because I was a Methodist. He then spoke of another charge he had in view for me; and mentioned also that Mr. Hamilton Brown was desirous of giving me employment, but that he was so much intimidated by the threats that were held out against all who favoured Sectarians, that he durst not venture to do it.

He further assured me, that unless I would agree to enrol myself as a member of the Colonial Church Union, and renounce, "even the very appearance of sectarianism," he saw no likelihood of my being enabled to obtain or hold any situation in the colony; adding emphatically, that unless I did this, he could not guarantee any thing in regard to me—no, not even life itself. On this occasion I expressed my surprise, that the planters should be so *outrageously* partial

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to Churchmen in opposition to the Sectarians, when they could not be ignorant that many eminent ministers and members of the Church of England were labouring for the abolition of Slavery with not less zeal than the Wesleyans or Baptists. The attorney replied significantly, (and his word made a deep impression on me) "It is an opinion amongst us, but one which we do not wish to acknowledge or to be known, that *slavery and knowledge are incompatible.*" These were this gentleman's own words—a man of whom I woul not willingly speak unkindly, for I was always hospitably received, and otherwise kindly treated by him;* but as respects his unscrupulous support of the Colonial system, I leave the reader to judge for himself.

On this and other occasions I thought it my duty to acquaint the attorney with my observations and my feelings, in regard to the cruel floggings and severe treatment generally, which I had witnessed at New Ground. He admitted the facts, but said that plantation work could not be carried on without the cart-whip. He moreover laboured hard to convince me that the flogging did not injure the health of the negroes.

I also told him of the exceeding immorality and licentiousness which I had witnessed; mentioning, in substance, the facts previously detailed. He replied, that that was a thing which they (the attorneys) must "wink at." He said he had but two married overseers under him upon the several properties he managed, and he intended never to have another; for (he remarked) the overseers, book-keepers, and head carpenters, generally took for their mistresses the sisters or daughters of the drivers or carpenters; by which means, if any plot was hatching amongst the slaves, some intimation of it was almost certain to be conveyed by these channels to the whites upon the plantation. And for the sake of such a wretched security, this gentleman, in the true spirit of the

* I have not given this gentleman's *name*, from a reluctance to hurt the feelings of an individual whose hospitality I have enjoyed; but I cannot conscientiously suppress his *opinions*, which serve so well to illustrate the colonial system. If a man, in manners so much the gentleman, and in other respects so estimable, is, as a supporter of that system, necessarily led to countenance, or to "wink at," the enormities I have feebly attempted to describe, what, I ask, is to be expected from its subordinate administrators, who are continually exposed to all the demoralizing influences of slavery? What, indeed, but the frightful wickedness and cruelty which are its actual fruits!

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system (though in other respects apparently a benevolent and honourable man) was content to "wink at" the wickedness.

Soon after this, a person of my acquaintance came up from St. Ann's Bay, and advised me to leave New Ground estate without delay, because the members of the Colonial Church Union down at the Bay were determined to do me some mischief. I felt somewhat alarmed on receiving this intimation, and expressed my apprehensions to the overseer. He replied, that there was no occasion for me to leave the estate—that I need not be at all afraid, for (as he vehemently swore) he would sooner lose his own life than deliver me up to my enemies. How far Mr. M'Lean was sincere in his assurances and professions I shall not pretend positively to determine. I subsequently thought I saw good cause to believe him not averse to any scheme that would lead to my removal *quietly* from New Ground estate;—of nothing worse, as regards myself, have I the least reason to suspect him. But, at the period I now advert to, I did not entertain even the suspicion I have now expressed; and, moreover, I was at a great loss what course to adopt, for if I left the estate, I knew not well where else to betake myself.

About a fortnight after my return from my last visit to the attorney, a deputation from St. Ann's Colonial Church Union waited upon me. This took place on one of the militia muster days. I observed that day that a number of overseers and book-keepers called at New Ground estate, as they returned from muster, and I noticed a great deal of whispering among them. Just at dusk two persons, under the character of a deputation from the Colonial Church Union, made their appearance, and demanded an interview with me. The overseer introduced them—a Mr. Dicken and a Mr. Brown. The former I had previously met with, but to my salutation he now made no response. Mr. Brown was spokesman, and commenced by informing me that they came as a deputation from more than a hundred gentlemen at St. Ann's Bay, to state to me,—1st. That they had heard I had been leading the minds of the slaves astray by holding forth doctrines of a tendency to make them discontented with their present condition. 2ndly. That I was a Methodist, and that my relative who had sent me to Jamaica was a d——d Methodist. And, 3rdly. That they had a barrel of tar down at the Bay to tar and feather me, as I well deserved, and that they "would do so, by G—d."

In reply, I acknowledged that I was undoubtedly a Metho-

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dist; but added, mildly, that I was altogether unconscious of any act, since I arrived in the island, whereby I could have given any reasonable offence to the planters or any other class of men; and I begged them to specify my offences. Mr. Brown then stated, that in the first place, I had written a letter to the Rev. Thomas Pennock, Wesleyan Missionary. 2ndly. That in a letter I had written to Mr. ————, the attorney, I had said, "The Lord reward you for the kindnesses you have shewn me, and grant you in health and wealth long to live." 3dly. That I had said to a slave who had opened a gate to me at a certain place, "The Lord bless you." 4thly. That I had asked the drivers of the workhouse gang questions respecting the offences of the negroes of that gang. 5thly. That I had made private remarks about the way in which I had seen Mr. M'Lean, the overseer, treat the slaves. (Here Dicken, who was an overseer at Winsor, a neighbouring plantation, told me he had two negroes at that moment in the stocks, and added, with a brutal oath,* if I would come over in the morning he would let me see them properly flogged.) 6thly. That I had preached to a hundred and fifty slaves at one time.—To all these charges I pleaded guilty, except the last, which was without foundation—without even a shadow of truth; though, if it had been true, it would have been difficult for me to admit its criminality. Dicken then drew his hand across my throat, and swore by his Maker that he would be the first man to cut it if I should dare to talk to the slaves in the same way again. He then pulled out a pistol, which he cocked, and held out (but did not point it at my person); saying, that if he was to fire it off, there would be twenty men in the house in one minute, ready to do whatever they chose with me. Mr. M'Lean, the overseer, here spoke up, and said, with considerable vehemence, that before he would see me abused he would rather have a ball through his own breast.

I then told them that there was no occasion for violence; that I was quite willing, under the circumstances in which I found myself, to leave the island by the very first conveyance; and should be glad if they and their friends would only permit me to do so quietly. They promised to report

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* The planters of all ranks, with very rare exceptions, are shocking swearers; the more vulgar sort interlarding their profaneness with the most revolting obscenity.

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this reply to their Society, the Colonial Church Union, and so departed.

It was agreed that I should sail in the ship "Huskisson," and that I might remain on the estate till that vessel was ready; but having been seen conversing with Mr. Watkis, a Wesleyan, and a brother of the member of the Colonial Assembly of that name, the attorney was informed of this (no other fault was alleged), and he sent word to the overseer to enforce my departure *immediately*. I was hurried off accordingly; and, in my way from St. Ann's to Annotto Bay, I saw the attorney once more. He then told me that it was necessary, for both his sake and mine, that I should leave the country; and apologized for his hurrying my departure by stating that he had recently received many violent letters on my account from the Colonial Unionists, threatening to pull his house about his ears, as other houses had been pulled about the ears of the owners, on similar grounds elsewhere.

I proceeded from St. Ann's to Annotto Bay to await the sailing of the vessel; and, while thus detained, I had a pretty severe attack of the country fever, which confined me for ten days. On the 8th of December I sailed from Jamaica, having been just three months and six days on the island.

I leave the facts, thus plainly related, as they fell under my observation during this short residence, to the reader's calm reflection. They will sufficiently display the character of Negro Slavery, as it now exists in Jamaica, without any comment of mine. But as I have mentioned that I left England with a persuasion that the general condition of the West India slaves was, on the whole, much preferable to that of the children in our factories, it is proper to state the conviction with which I have returned—which is this. The condition of the factory children is certainly very deplorable, and calls loudly for amelioration; and I shall most cordially rejoice to see the friends of Negro Emancipation co-operating with the friends of Factory Regulation, in carrying the Ten Hours' Bill speedily through Parliament. But between the cases of the factory child and the plantation slave there can be no just comparison. The former is very bad: the latter is INFINITELY WORSE.

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APPENDIX.

London, March 28, 1833.

Some of Mr. Whiteley's friends, whom he has consulted in regard to this publication, being of opinion that a few testimonials may be usefully appended to it, in order to give it due weight with readers unacquainted with the writer's character, he has been induced to place at their disposal a few letters and certificates, from which they have selected the following. The originals are left in the hands of the publishers (Messrs. Hatchard), and may be freely perused by any person who desires to see them.

I. *Extract of a letter from Richard Oastler, Esq., of Fixby Hall, near Huddersfield, to the Rev. Mr. Ellis, Moravian Minister, Fairfield, Jamaica.*

"*London, July* 8, 1832.

"My Dear Sir,

"I have this day called in Fetter Lane, hoping to find my old friend, Peter Latrobe, but unfortunately he was not at home. I intended that he should introduce my friend, the bearer of this, to you; but as that may not be, receive Mr. Henry Whiteley in love from an old friend. He is a young man whom I much admire: he has been working with me in forwarding the emancipation of the factory slaves here; and now his lot is cast among the poor blacks. Well—he is a Methodist local preacher, and he intends to preach the gospel to the slaves; and, being of opinion that you would be glad to give him your advice and help, I felt particularly wishful to place him under your direction. May our dear Saviour make him useful.

(Signed) "Richard Oastler."

"Tell your poor slaves to pray for the poor factory children in England, and to petition for their emancipation. R. O."

II. *Extract of a letter from the Rev. John Kingdon, Baptist Missionary, to John Elliott, Esq., Denmark Hill, near London.*

"*Kingston, Jamaica, November* 27, 1832.

"My Dear Christian Brother,

"The bearer of this, Mr. Whiteley, is about to return to England, should his Heavenly Father restore him from the severe fever he is now labouring under; and as he appears to be a very pious man, of your own denomination, and one who has endured well 'a great fight of afflictions' for the sake of Jesus Christ, I know not to whom in town I could more appropriately introduce him in his present difficulties. A few months since he came out with the view of taking the situation of book-keeper, on a property in St. Ann's parish, which a relative is interested in; all the while hoping to be permitted to 'preach the unsearchable riches of Christ' to the poor dear negroes. If he could have smothered the flame from heaven which glowed

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within, he might have quietly pursued the former project; but because the love of Christ constrained him to shun or reprove the wicked, he was at once denounced as a 'sectarian,' and treated with barbarity, as you will hear from himself. Thus is he compelled to return to England, after sustaining serious expenses. * * * * *

"I expect my brother, who takes this to Mr. Whiteley, to go this evening.

"I remain, &c.,

(Signed) "JOHN KINGDON."

III.

"*Heckmondwike, March* 23, 1833.

"We, the undersigned, hereby certify, that the bearer, Mr. Henry Whiteley, a native of this place, and resident here, until his departure for Jamaica, in July last, is, in our opinion, a highly respectable young man, of unimpeachable integrity as a man and as a Christian:—

(Signed) "C. ETHERINGTON, merchant, Heckmondwike.
"HENRY OATES, ditto ditto.
"JOHN ROYLE, wine merchant, ditto.
"RAWSON WEBSTER, surgeon, ditto.
"THOMAS HIRST, woolstapler, ditto.
"G. THOMPSON, minister, ditto.
"HENRY BEAN, minister, ditto.
"JONATHAN POPPLEWELL, grocer, ditto.
"ROBERT MARTIN, minister, ditto.
"JOSEPH M'CREERY, minister, ditto.

"The bearer, Mr. Henry Whiteley, is not personally known to me, but I have for many years known his father, and several of the merchants and others, whose signatures are given above, as persons of respectability and highly worthy of credit.

(Signed) "HAMMOND ROBERTSON,
"Incumbent of (the adjacent church) Liveredge."

"I have not known the bearer, Mr. Henry Whiteley, but can testify to the respectability of the persons who have signed their names to the above character.

(Signed) "BENJAMIN HUTCHINSON, Curate."

London: S. Bagster, Jun., Printer, 14, Bartholomew Close

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SHT 1096THREE MONTHS IN JAMAICA IN 1832. H. WHITELEY.